Medieval Studies

No. 16.

Infant Perdition in the Middle Ages

BY

G. G. COULTON

M.A. Camb.; Hon. D.Litt. Durham.

BR
252
C68
1922
GTU
Storage

London:
Marshall, Hamilton, Kent and Co., Ltd.
4, Stationers' Hall Court, E.C. 4.
1922

Medieval Studies.

FIRST SERIES. Second Revised Edition, with Appendix. Boards, **6/-** *net*. Contents: (1) The Monastic Legend; (2) A Revivalist of Six Centuries ago; (3) Sidelights on the Franciscans; (4) The High Ancestry of Puritanism; (5) Romanism and Morality; (6) The Truth about the Monasteries; (7) Religious Education before the Reformation.

SECOND SERIES.

(8) Priests and People in Medieval England ... ... **1/-** *net*.
(9) The Failure of the Friars ... ... **6d.** ,,
(10) Monastic Schools in the Middle Ages ... ... **2/6** ,,
(11) French Monasticism in 1503; a full summary of the rare *Monastice Reformationis Vindicie* of Gui Jouenneaux ... ... **2/6** ,,
(12) I... **1/-** ,,
(13) T... **6d.** ,,
(14) T...d.) **2/-** ,,
(15) I... **1/6** ,,
(16) I... **3/-** ,,

SIMPKIN, M... COURT, E.C. 4

P... ...KS.

CHAUCE... ...HUEN & Co.,
15/- *n*...
Times.—"... ...hich gives life to work of a...
FROM ST... ...DUCKWORTH AND C...
Independe... ...read by every-one who wa...
A MEDI... ...Four Centuries ... CONSTABLE AND C...
Nation.—...
SOCIAL ... REFO... ...T TO THE ... UNIVI... CAMBRIDGE
Pall Mall...
CHRIST, ... PRESS... ... UNIVERSITY
Times.—"... ...ter than most Modernists ...
FRIAR'S ... TAUN... ...SSEX PRESS,

Commonwealth.—"A book worthy of a place beside *The Cloister and the Hearth* as a true work of art."

THE
SANDFORD FLEMING
LIBRARY
BERKELEY BAPTIST DIVINITY SCHOOL
EX - LIBRIS

BERKELEY BAPTIST DIVINITY SCHOOL

GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL UNION
LIBRARY
1960

Infant Perdition in the Middle Ages

SUMMARY OF CONTENTS.

Genesis of this pamphlet; Father Furniss and the Children's Oven (p. 1)—Variations in Roman Catholic opinion on this subject (p. 2)—Medieval emphasis on damnation (p. 2)—My critics unaware of the historical facts (p. 3)—The Councils of Lyons and Florence condemn unbaptized children to "hell" (p. 4)—The Catechism of the Council of Trent, to "eternal misery and perdition" (p. 5)—Cardinal Bellarmine's authority (p. 5)—He is certain they cannot go to heaven (p. 6)—Nor enjoy even "natural happiness" (p. 6)—Yet we must avoid the other extreme (p. 7)—Our natural pity for dead infants is irrelevant to this discussion (p. 7)—Scripture forbids them heaven (p. 8)—So do the Councils (p. 8)—And Popes (p. 8)—And Fathers (p. 8)—Unbaptized children are captives in Satan's dungeon (p. 9)—Their place is hell (p. 9)—The "natural happiness" heresy exploded (p. 10)—Even the merciful Schoolmen put them in hell (p. 11)—Therefore, as fellow-citizens with devils (p. 12)—Yet not in bodily pain (p. 12)—Innocent III does not deny that they suffer (p. 12)—Replies to objections (p. 13)—St. Thomas Aquinas was mistaken on this subject (p. 13)—It is false to claim "the Doctors of the Church" as generally inclined to the milder judgement (p. 14)—Even some Schoolmen take the severer view (p. 15)—What we may learn from this summary of Bellarmine's (p. 15)—The great Jesuit Petavius supports him (p. 15)—It was Abelard who started the milder judgement (p. 16)—The *Catholic Encyclopedia* seriously mistranslates the words of Innocent III (p. 17)—And the more ordinary churchmen of the Middle Ages were far less merciful than the Schoolmen (p. 18)—Aelred of Rievaulx (p. 18)—Meffret's sermons: "punished in eternal fire" (p. 19)—"eternally, yet mercifully" (p. 20)—Herolt "the Soul is lost" (p. 20)—Robert of Brunne, "pain without end" (p. 21)—Giraldus Cambrensis (p. 21)—Dante (p. 22)—Berthold of Regensburg (p. 22)—Herolt again (p. 23)—Even Aquinas and Bonaventura will not let us pray for them (p. 23)—God does not love them (p. 23)—Erasmus and More plead for mercy (p. 23)—But great Catholic scholars still deny it (p. 24)—The *Catholic Encyclopedia* and the Council of Florence (p. 25)—Its arguments exploded by Petavius and De Rubeis (p. 25)—Manning's views (p. 26)—The chaos of Roman Catholic opinion (p. 26)—And the historical ignorance of the Catholic Truth Society (p. 27)—Not the Church, but civilization has brought us to reason (p. 28)—Shifts of Catholic apologetics (p. 28)—And ignorance even of the real Catholic past (p. 29)—*Securus judicat orbis terrarum* (p. 30).

APPENDIX.

I. J. Furniss. The Sight of Hell.
II. Aquinas on Hell and Limbo.
III. Cardinal De Noris on Infant Perdition.
IV. Aquinas's Apologia.
V. The Catholic Truth Society,

On page 41 of *The Hibbert Journal* for October, 1922, I had occasion to reply to Mr. Bernard Holland, who, on page 640 of the previous issue, founded his plea for Roman Catholicism upon the assertion that "the faith of the [Roman] Church, in the worst times, has never been tainted." I wrote "Let us put this rhetorical assertion—which, if tenable in cold blood, would go to the very root of the matter—to the touch of one single test. The salvation or damnation of the vast majority of our fellow-men is a far more important question than dozens of others with which Popes

41575

and Councils have long and laboriously concerned themselves. The most orthodox Roman Catholic may well care more, in his heart of hearts, for the salvation of the mass of his fellows than for the question whether the Virgin Mary was conceived in original sin (as the greatest orthodox saints held in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries) or not (as a Pope has since decided). That point, so passionately debated for centuries, is quite secondary to the question what Christ really meant when He said that many are called, but few chosen. Yet this is a point on which no Pope has dared or cared to decide, and on which the Church has executed a complete *volte-face* within comparatively recent times. At the crown of the Middle Ages, nobody doubted that the vast majority of us would finally find our way to an eternity of torments so exquisite that theologians exhausted all the arts of eloquence in describing what they admitted to be only the fringe of these indescribable horrors. *Salvandorum paucitas, damnandorum multitudo* was a commonplace from Augustine onwards. The escape of Noah and his tiny fellowship was taken as foreshadowing the proportions that would be saved from hell; orthodox and well-meaning men sometimes committed themselves to rough numerical statistics; the most favourable that I know of represent the saved as one per thousand. This outlasted the Reformation in orthodox Catholicism as elsewhere; the great Massillon, only two centuries ago, feared that there might well be only one who should go to heaven from among the multitude whom he was addressing; again, less than a century ago, a Jesuit priest described the unbaptised children of Christian parents as writhing in the agony of hell-fire.[1] Yet these are things which no Catholic priest or prelate would dare to preach at the present moment; let us say further, in justice, that not one of them even thinks these things. . . . To all practical purposes, the gulf here between Mr. Holland and the average orthodox Catholic of the thirteenth century is enormous; far greater, perhaps, in God's sight, than anything which differentiates him from the average Anglican of to-day."

I soon received a number of communications pointing out that Father Furniss (*not* Furness) was a Redemptorist priest and not a Jesuit, and that the *Spectator* quotation referred not to an unbaptized child but to one which, though young enough to be regularly called only *it*, was old enough to have committed mortal sin, knowing it to be wrong. The whole paragraph referred to may be found in Appendix I to this pamphlet. I must begin, therefore, by correcting those errors, one of which I had picked up directly, and the other by inference, from *The Spectator*, on whose authority alone I made the whole statement. Furniss's book was not in the Cambridge University Library; I should have been much wiser if I had waited to verify my reference some day at the British Museum; but an assertion which had passed uncorrected in *The Spectator* seemed trustworthy enough, so long as I clearly gave this as my only authority; this may palliate, though not excuse, my error.

But how do these mistakes affect my argument? The first mis-

1. Father Furness, S.J., about 1850, quoted by a correspondent in *The Spectator*, 9th March, 1912; cf. the issue of 24th February.

statement of *The Spectator* is quite irrelevant; it is just as significant that a Redemptorist Father should print wicked nonsense *permissu superiorum*, as that a Jesuit should do the same. The second error does not in any way weaken my main contention, that Roman Catholics of the past dealt in damnation so freely as to shock the Roman Catholic of to-day. Though Furniss was in full vogue somewhere about 1850, and the *Catholic Encyclopedia* boasts that "more than four millions of his books have been sold throughout English-speaking countries," and celebrates his "scathing answer to an attack by *The Saturday Review*, which was then the great organ of unbelief in England," yet it refers in the same breath to "the somewhat lurid eschatology of the children's books"; and these are now difficult to procure. A correspondent writes to me from Ireland: "It is rather difficult for a Protestant to obtain them here at present; and I have some suspicion that a few have been withdrawn from circulation owing to certain adverse criticisms in some of the English religious periodicals. A few years ago I got them easily; now, they are not so easily obtainable." This, so far as it goes, tends rather to strengthen my contention that the Roman Catholic point of view has changed here, not through the decrees of Popes and Councils, but under the quiet pressure of enlightenment and civilization. I wish therefore, to make plain from the outset, that I gave Furniss his wrong spelling and title, and that I did him and the whole modern Roman Catholic Church the injustice of supposing that the words to be found in Appendix I, here below, had been written concerning unbaptized infants. My correspondents, and a reference to the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, have made it abundantly plain that such doctrines would be universally repudiated by the Roman Catholicism of to-day. But the historical fields into which my critics have led me, (far beyond that medieval evidence which alone I had studied in the past), have proved so curious in themselves, and have afforded such interesting corroboration of my main thesis as to the fact and the causes of serious variations in doctrine within that Church, that I have decided here to publish the results of my more recent researches side by side with the medieval evidence which I had collected and with which, so far as I can find, nobody has yet dealt.

It is this incident, therefore, which has led me to publish now at once, in this separate pamphlet, the substance of the appendix which, in *The Hibbert Journal*, I had announced as prepared for the first volume of my *Five Centuries of Religion*. One of my critics, naturally enough, was the Secretary of the Catholic Truth Society, who has sent me certain strictures which will be dealt with later, from a correspondent who prefers to remain anonymous, but whom the Secretary regards as a trustworthy exponent of the Roman Catholic belief with regard to the future state of unbaptized children. Another has had the courtesy to send me a manual of theology which may be regarded, he assures me, as authoritative in its exposition of that subject: *Synopsis Theologiae Dogmaticae ad mentem S. Thomae Aquinatis hodiernis moribus accommodata*, vol. iii, by Ad. Tanquerey (Rome, Desclée, 1919. 16th edition). This deals only very briefly and incidentally with the subject; the author explains that the Limbo of Children is sometimes improperly [*minus proprie*]

called Hell, and refers for this to Aquinas (*In III Sent.* dist. 22, q. 2, a. 1). This is misleading: though Aquinas represents the mildest type of medieval opinion on this subject, yet he says nothing about the impropriety of using *hell* for *limbo*; on the contrary, he distinctly reckons the limbo as part of hell.[1] My Catholic Truth Society critic appears to be still less trustworthy; I shall have occasion to deal with him later. It is evident that even the better scholars among English Roman Catholics may live in ignorance of the real history of this doctrine; no even approximately exhaustive account, so far as I can find, has appeared in this language. I therefore propose to enquire briefly here: (1) Have sweeping changes of belief as to the fate of unbaptized children come about within the Roman Catholic Church? and (2) is it the official Church which is responsible for those changes, or is it the march of civilization which has gradually brought Catholic people to disbelieve, and Catholic priests to cease preaching, what was preached and believed in the past? And, in arguing this question, we need not dispute two otherwise disputable assumptions from the Roman Catholic side. We may allow them to count as their own all the orthodox Latin ecclesiastical writers from the very earliest times; and, again, we may treat the Council of Florence (A.D. 1439) as Ecumenical, and consequently take its decrees as absolutely binding upon all true Catholics.

One of these decrees runs as follows; "the souls of those dying in actual mortal sin, or in original sin alone, go down at once into hell, to be punished, however, with different punishments."[2] This, on the face of it, would seem conclusive up to a certain point. It is a definite article of faith in Catholicism that unbaptized children die in original sin; and all who die in original sin, (says this Council), must share in punishment with grown folk who die in mortal sin; only there is an undefined difference of degree. Moreover, this assertion has not only the explicit authority of the Pope and Fathers at Florence, it had also the implicit approval of Gregory X and his prelates at the earlier Ecumenical Council of Lyons in 1274. At that Council, the Greek Emperor appeared and made submission to the Roman Church, reciting in token of that submission a confession of faith "such as the Roman Church teacheth and preacheth." In that confession he uses exactly the same Latin words as were adopted later at Florence; and we have, in this case, the added certainty of a Greek original, which agrees with the Latin. This confession of faith was adopted by the Pope and Fathers of Lyons; all Roman Catholics are bound, as the very basis of their profession, to "receive unhesitatingly all things handed down, defined and decreed by

1. *See* appendix II here below.

2. I have here adopted, for convenience, the translation given by Prof. Toner in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, only omitting the word *widely* which he takes the liberty of inserting before *different*, without any justification whatever from the original. The actual words of the decree run "illorum animas qui in actuali mortali peccato, vel solo originali decedunt, mox in infernum descendere, *poenis tamen disparibus puniendas*." Nor is there the least justification for this word *widely* in the Greek original, read before the Council of Lyons, which ran ποίαις ἀνίσοις τιμωρηθησομένας. Mansi, *Concilia* an. 1274, col. 72).

the sacred Canons and the Ecumenical Councils, and especially by the holy Council of Trent" (Creed of Pope Pius IV). Therefore this "unequal punishment" for unbaptized children, (whatever it may mean), has been a necessary article of faith to all Roman Catholics for the last three-and-a-half centuries, and must for ever remain an immutable factor in their official creed.

Again, after the Council of Trent, Pius V commissioned a body of divines to draw up an authoritative Catechism, embodying the decrees of that council, and designed to prescribe with the utmost possible precision all articles of the true faith, as opposed to the heresies taught outside the Roman Church. This "Catechism of the Council of Trent," published in 1566, deals as follows with unbaptized infants: "There also can appear nothing more necessary than that they [the faithful] be taught that the law of baptism is prescribed by our Lord to all, insomuch that they, unless they be regenerated unto God through the grace of baptism, be their parents Christian or infidel, *are born to eternal misery and perdition.*"[1] Here again, therefore, it is an article of Roman Catholic faith that unbaptized infants are in some sense, "miserable" to all eternity. We will deal later on with the efforts of modern writers to explain these words away; but we must begin by briefly surveying those centuries of dispute which led up to these official pronouncements. Fortunately, they have been summed up with some approach to exhaustiveness by a Cardinal who is above all suspicion of anti-Catholic bias.

Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621) was nephew to Pope Marcellus II; he joined the Jesuit Order at the age of eighteen, was made Rector of the *Collegium Romanum* in 1592, Cardinal in 1599, and Archbishop of Capua in 1602. In those years of the Counter-Reformation, when Protestant and Catholic scholars were arrayed against each other in the field of learning just as the rival armies were arrayed against each other in the battle-field, Bellarmine became the standard Roman controversialist, as Baronius was their standard historian. A process for his canonization is pending, if not completed, at the present moment; in a few years at most, if not already, Saint Bellarmine will probably have his officially-recognized cult. But Bellarmine knew too much history to be wholly satisfied with certain tendencies of his own day; and, on this question of infant perdition, he did much to expose the weakness, from an orthodox theological point of view, of those milder speculations which were in accordance with the growing humanitarianism of his age.[2] The summary which I will give here is taken from his *De Amissione Gratiae*, Book VI,

1. Here, again, I have adopted Donovan's translation, published by ecclesiastical authority (Manchester, 1855, p. 167). The original of the words I have italicized in the text runs "in sempiternam miseriam et interitum a parentibus procreentur." An earlier authorized version (*permissu Superiorum*, London, 1687, p. 161) translates "are begotten to eternal misery and destruction." In French (*Traduction Nouvelle par M. l'Abbé Doney*. Besançon, 1838, vol. 1, p. 324) it runs "ne viendraient au monde que pour leur malheur éternel."

2. Bellarmine died only a little before the date (about 1650) when Freemasonry began to exist as a wide-spread institution aiming at social solidarity and charity, as far removed as possible from restrictions of creed or nationality. Before his birth, Erasmus and other humanists had accustomed thinking minds in Europe to similar conceptions.

chapters 1. ff: pp. 399 ff of the Cologne edition of 1619. It is necessary to abridge a good deal; but I give it all in direct translation from the writer's own words, except where my own summaries are marked by smaller type. I have sometimes simplified the references.

Bellarmine's Summary of the Controversy.

CHAPTER I.

Various opinions concerning the Penalty of Original Sin after this Life.

. . . Let us begin with those who die unbaptized in infancy, and bring with them no other guilt than that of original sin. There are five several opinions concerning the punishment [*supplicio*] of such infants, ranging gradually from the utmost mildness to the utmost severity.

1.—The first opinion was that of those who dared to promise the Kingdom of Heaven to unbaptized children, even though they admitted them to be conceived and born in original sin. So held a certain Vincentius, whom St. Augustine refutes. . . Zwingli, in our age, fell into the same error . . . and this error, so far as concerneth the children of the faithful, is followed by many sectaries, as Bucer, Peter Martyr, and Calvin, whom I have refuted in my book on Baptism, chapter IV.[1]

2.—The next is indeed rather less liberal, yet very mild. It is that of those who, though excluding unbaptized infants from the Kingdom of Heaven, and from the blessed life promised to the saints, yet did grant them eternal life, and a natural happiness without any uneasiness or pain [*naturalem beatitudinem sine ulla molestia aut dolore*] outside the Kingdom of Heaven, and far away from the prison of the damned; that is, midway between hell and heaven; which place can scarcely be imagined elsewhere than this terrestrial globe. St. Augustine, in chapter 85 of his book *Of Heresies*, teacheth that the Pelagians of old held this opinion: "For," saith Augustine, "even to the unbaptized they promise a sort of life of their own, outside the Kingdom of God yet happy and everlasting." . . . Thus the Pelagians promised to unbaptized infants not everlasting life in its simple sense [of Heaven] but, as Augustine saith, "a sort of everlasting life of their own." The nearest approach to this error seems to have been made [among Catholics] by Ambrosius Catharinus[2] in his book *Of the State of Children that die unbaptized*, by Albertus Pighius in his first *Controversy*,[3] and by Jerome Savonarola in his *Triumph of the Cross*. For these teach that unbaptized infants, after the Last Judgment, shall be happy with a natural happiness [*beatos naturali beatitudine*], and that they will live in perpetual felicity in a sort of Earthly Paradise.

3.—The third opinion, somewhat more severe, teacheth that infants

1. Protestantism, on this point, has sometimes been more lenient than Catholicism, and sometimes more severe.

2. A Roman Catholic divine of Naples, d. 1552.

3. A German Roman Catholic controversialist, d. 1542.

dying unbaptized are condemned to eternal death in hell [*damnari apud inferos aeterna morte*], but that they are thus punished by the lack of the Vision of God, which is called the penalty of loss [*poena damni*], so that they suffer no pain whatsoever, whether outward or inward. So St. Thomas teaches in his *De Malo* (Q.V., art. 1, 2 and 3) and not only he but some other scholastic doctors in their commentaries on [Peter Lombard's] *Sentences*, Bk. II, dist. 9.

4.—The fourth, yet more severe, doth indeed free the children from the torment of fire, and from that worm of Mark ix, 44, " their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched," which is properly called the penalty of sense [*poena sensus*], but it doth not free them from that inward pain which followeth from the loss of the blessedness of eternal felicity. This is the teaching of Peter Lombard (*Sentences*, Bk. II, dist. 33) and he is followed by some others, as enumerated by St. Thomas, St. Bonaventura, Gregory of Rimini, and others in their commentaries on that passage.

5.—The fifth and extremest is the opinion of those who hold that infants, by reason of original sin, are tormented for ever in hell [*in gehenna perpetuo cruciari*] both by *poena damni* and by *poena sensus*; that is the opinion to which Gregory of Rimini[1] openly inclines in his comment on *Sentences*, II, 33, and John Driedo[2] in his *Grace and Free Will*, Bk. I, tr. iii, c. 2.

The heretics of our times delight specially in extreme opinions, wherefore they either place unbaptized infants with the blessed in heaven, as Zwingli and Calvin, or condemn them to everlasting fire, as may be plainly gathered from Luther, Melanchthon and others . . .

CHAPTER II.

Wherein the first and second Opinion are refuted, and it is maintained that Infants dying unbaptized will be condemned to the Penalty of eternal Death.

Of these aforesaid opinions, the first and second must be judged not only false but even heretical; as against them we must hold, by the Catholic faith, that infants dying unbaptized are absolutely condemned, and shall for ever lack not only heavenly but even natural happiness [*absolute esse damnatos, et non sola coelesti, sed etiam naturali beatitudine perpetuo carituros*]. And here it seems that we should note, by way of preface, that our own pity for dead infants doth avail them nought; nor, again, do we in any way harm them by the severity of our opinion; on the other hand, it is great harm to ourselves if, through a useless pity for the dead, we defend pertinaciously any opinion which is against Scripture or the Church; wherefore we must not here follow a certain human affection whereby many are commonly moved; but rather we

1. A famous Schoolman who taught at Paris and died in 1358.
2. Professor at Louvain, d. 1535.

should consult and follow the verdict of Scripture, the Councils, and the Fathers.

1.—Bellarmine proceeds to disprove these first two milder judgements by quoting John iii, 5, 14, 36; I Thess. ii, 16; Eph. ii, 3; Rom. v, 18; and Apoc. xx, 6, 15. From these last two authors he deduces the following conclusions :—

Yet they will not be said to rise again unto life, but unto death; and they shall rise again that they may be wretched for ever [*qui ideo resurgent, ut perpetuo sint miseri*]. . . . But unbaptized infants have no part in the first resurrection, nor are they written in the Book of Life; therefore the second death hath power over them, and they are cast into the lake of fire.

2.—He next proceeds to quote from conciliar decrees. The Council of Carthage teaches that baptism saves infants from *perdition*, and two world-councils are even more definite :—

The [ecumenical] Council of Florence, in its last session, in the decree *Illorum*, saith that souls which die in actual mortal sin, or merely in original sin, go down forthwith to hell, but are destined to be punished with unequal pains [*mox in infernum descendere, poenis tamen disparibus puniendas*]. The [ecumenical] Council of Trent, in its fifth session, in agreement with earlier councils, taught in plain terms that unbaptized infants do not come to eternal life.[1]

3.—He then passes on to Popes; a few specimens will suffice :—

St. Gregory saith in his *Moralia* (lib. IX, c. 16): "Some are taken from the light of day before they are able to produce good or evil deserts in active life. These, because the Sacraments of Salvation do not free them from original sin, and because they have wrought nothing of their own here on earth, come there also to perpetual torment" [*ad tormenta perpetua*]. And again "those indeed receive perpetual torments who of their own will have wrought no sin."

4.—Then, to the Fathers, from whom again I will select a few specimens :—

Augustine saith (*De Orig. Animae*, lib. I, c. 9): "Let no man promise unto unbaptized infants any sort of intermediate place of any rest or any happiness whatsoever, between damnation and the Kingdom of Heaven; for it was the Pelagian heresy which permitted this" [*inter damnationem regnumque coelorum quietis vel felicitatis cujuslibet, atque ubilibet quasi medium locum*]. . . . The Venerable Bede saith, in the 10th chapter of his *Commentary on John*, "The Christian heart must

1. "Disertis verbis docent, parvulos sine Baptismo ad vitam aeternam non pervenire." The official *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, as noted above, is still more explicit: "Nothing is more necessary than that the faithful should be taught how our Lord prescribed the law of baptism to all human beings [*omnibus hominibus*]; so that, unless they be born again unto God by the grace of baptism, they are begotten by their parents, (whether these be faithful or unbelievers), to eternal wretchedness and ruin; [*in sempiternam miseriam et interitum a parentibus, sive illi fideles sive infideles sint, procreentur*]. Pars. II, c. ii, § 31.

repudiate those men who dream that Christ said *many mansions* because there will be some place outside the Kingdom of Heaven wherein those innocents may live happily [*beate*] who left this world unbaptized, seeing that without Baptism they could not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." St. Anselm saith (*De Conceptu Virginali*, c. 27) "If original sin be sin at all, then all men born therein, if they cast it not off, must be damned." And St. Bernard, in his 191st Letter, to Pope Innocent II, "Infants, if not baptized, are lost."

5.—My fifth argument may be taken from reasons founded on Scripture and the Fathers. (*a*) Whereof this is the first, that unbaptized children are captives in the devil's power, both in this world and in the next; wherefore they are not happy even with natural happiness, but absolutely unhappy and miserable [*absolute infelices et miseri*]. And indeed it is most certain that little infants, unbaptized, are prisoners in the devil's power [proof from Col. I. 13, Acts xxvi. 18, and Luke xi. 21]. And St. John saith (xii, 31) "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out." Now, that this casting-out of the devil is wrought through Baptism, is shown by those exorcisms and exsufflations[1] which have ever been used in the Church. St. Augustine saith (*De. Pecc. merit. et Remiss*, Bk. III, c. 34) "Would that some one of those who take the opposite opinion would bring me an infant to be baptized. What doth my exorcism upon that child, if he be not held in the devil's household?" . . . And again (*De Nupt. et Concupisc.* Bk. II, c. 18) "He accuseth the Church that is spread over the whole world, wherein all children at baptism are exsufflated for no other reason than that the prince of this world should be cast out; who must necessarily possess these vessels of wrath, since they are born in Adam, unless they be reborn in Christ, and brought to His Kingdom, as transformed by grace into vessels of mercy." You will find the like in all the Fathers, and even in the decrees of Popes themselves, as in Celestine's letter to the Gauls, in that of Zosimus to all the Bishops, and in that of Pope John [VIII] which is incorporated in Canon Law (Gratian, pars II, causa xxx, q. 1, c. 7) . . .

For who but a manifest heretic will deny that infants dying in sin will never be regenerated through Christ, nor ever at any time transferred to this Kingdom? Doth not St. Augustine plainly write, in plain words, that infants will be under the devil's power even after the Last Judgement? for he saith (*De Nupt. et Concupisc.* Bk. I, c. 23): "This wound, inflicted by the devil upon the human race, doth constrain all that is born of man to be under the devil's power." . . . Therefore unbaptized infants, since they will always be captives under their prince the devil, must be called not happy but wretched.

(*b*) My second reason is drawn from the place wherein infants live and ever will live; for their place is the prison of hell, a horrid and dismal place [*carcer inferni, locus horridus ac tenebricosus*] wherein whoso dwelleth

1. Literally, "blowing or spitting forth." In the earlier baptismal rites, the candidate for baptism thrice renounced the devil in set phrase: "among the Russians, the godfathers and godmothers do still, in the name of the child to be baptized, thrice answer to the question 'Dost thou renounce the devil?' spitting each time upon the ground" (Ducange, *s.v. exsufflatio*).

cannot possibly be happy, since happiness is defined as a state perfect in the aggregation of all good things. Now, that such infants have indeed their abode in the prison of hell is taught, first of all, by almost all the schoolmen—St. Thomas, St. Bonaventura, Durandus, Richardus Capreolus, and others in their commentaries on *Sentences*, lib. II, dist. 33, or lib. IV, dist. 45, and also Alexander of Hales (*Summa*, pars. II, 9. 122, m. 10, § 1) and Albert the Great (*Summa*, pars. II, 9, 113). The only difference among these old theologians is, that some place the infants in the higher part of hell, which they call the *Limbo of Children*, while others judge their abode to be with the rest of the damned. This is the teaching of the Fathers of the Council of Florence, in their decree of the last session, where they simply define that the souls of such as die in original sin only, or in actual mortal sin, go down to hell, but are to be punished with unequal pains. . . . The same is taught by the holy Fathers. . . . The author of *Hypognosticus*, who is either St. Augustine or, by common consent, some other ancient and learned author, in the second half of Book V, writes: "The Catholic faith, by God's authority, hath held the first place to be that of heaven, from whence (as I have said) the unbaptized are excluded. The second place is hell, where all apostates, or those who are strangers to Christ's faith, shall suffer eternal torments, [*aeterna supplicia experietur*]. We know nothing whatsoever of a third place; nay, we shall find none such in Holy Scripture; do thou, O Pelagian, forge from the workshop of thy perverse dogma some place wherein infants who are strangers to Christ's grace may possess a life of rest and glory." St. Fulgentius (*De Fide ad Petrum*, c. 27) numbers among the rules of faith that infants dying without Baptism shall find their place for ever in hell [*gehenna*]. The Venerable Bede, already quoted (*Com. on John*, c. 14) says that Christian hearts must repudiate the doctrine that any mansion of happiness exists outside the Kingdom of Heaven.

(*c*) Let this last reason be added, in clear proof that infants which will not be in heaven will dwell in no other place than the infernal regions below the earth [*inferorum subterraneas sedes*]

Bellarmine here launches into an elaborate argument based upon the very rudimentary notions of physical geography current in his day, and the traditional Aristotelian ideas of the corruptible and incorruptible portions of the universe. He then enquires into the nature of natural happiness; infants, he argues, have not in themselves the requisites for such happiness.

We may add a fourth reason in direct disproof of the opinion of Pighius and Catharinus, based upon the absurdity which follows therefrom. For if that were true which they write, that infants dying under original sin will not only lack all pain, internal or external, but even live for ever in bliss and felicity in a sort of Earthly Paradise, full of wisdom and virtue and fully content with their lot, loving God with all their heart, praising Him and oftentimes enjoying angelic company and revelations —if, I say, these things were true, then it would follow that infants were in a better state for having sinned in Adam, than if they had died in a mere natural state. For so much [as these authors predicate] is not due to human beings dying in the mere natural state of infancy; these

infants, therefore, would profit by their sin. Thence it would follow that infants should be baptized in order that they may obtain divine adoption and be admitted to the Kingdom of Heaven, but not because there is the danger of their being damned and lost (*ne damnentur et pereant*). For they have no evil beyond the absence of the Vision of God, and they lack no good but this Vision, that is, but the possession of the Kingdom of Heaven. But this is the very Pelagian heresy; for, as St. Augustine beareth witness (*De Orig. Amimae*, Bk. I, c. 9), the Pelagians feared no damnation for unbaptized children, but only exclusion from the Kingdom; and here Augustine, by this word *damnation*, understandeth not exclusion from the Kingdom, but something else; for, if *exclusion* and *damnation* were the same, then they who feared exclusion for the unbaptized would equally have feared damnation also for those same infants. Wherefore the same Augustine writeth (*De Haeres*, c. 88) that infants, according to the Pelagian heresy, needed baptism in order that they might be adopted by regeneration and admitted to the Kingdom of God; and not to save them from being lost, but to transfer them from good to better. We therefore, that we may be as far removed as possible from the error of the Pelagians, attribute to unbaptized infants no happy life; and we assert that they need baptism not only to save them from exclusion from the Kingdom of God but also that, being freed from sin, they may be freed likewise from the power of Satan and the prison of hell, and may receive eternal life and rest.

CHAPTER III.

Wherein we will answer Objections against the Doctrine of the preceding Chapter.

Briefer quotations will here suffice:—

If the damnation of infants be not eternal, then by the same reason the damnation of grown persons would seem not to be eternal. . . . If the damnation of sinners be not eternal, then we might even doubt of the blessedness promised to the saints, fearing lest this also be not eternal, as St. Augustine infers in his *City of God* (Bk. XXI, c. 24). . . .

Although the scholastic theologians are generally agreed upon the point that infants dying unbaptized suffer no sensible pain of corporal fire, yet they teach plainly (as we have quoted above) that these are in hell, and pay for ever the penalty of loss; wherein they do not grant them a middle place between the pains of hell and the Kingdom of Heaven, but confirm the fact that they will be punished in hell itself with a milder penalty than the rest; from which opinion even Augustine does not differ very widely. . . .

What Catholic can suffer the idea that human beings lacking faith and baptism should be called members of Christ, and that children of wrath should be children of the Kingdom, and that those who are not written

in the Book of Life should be, even after this life, fellow-citizens with the Saints and members of the household of God? Therefore, unbaptized infants are not as it were deferred, but clearly banished; and, dwelling below the earth very far from the Holy City, they enjoy the visitation neither of angels nor of blessed men. . . . St. Augustine, whom we have quoted above, hath very often noted that the Scriptures nowhere tell us of any places after the Last Judgment but two only; one in heaven with the angels, and the other with the devils in hell [*in inferno cum daemonibus*]. . . . If the souls of unbaptized children, as a penalty for original sin, are detained in a limbo under the earth, and if that sin be never remitted, as all Catholics steadily believe, it follows inevitably that the souls of such infants will never come forth from that subterranean limbo.

CHAPTER IV.

The fifth Opinion is confuted; and we maintain that unbaptized Infants will not be punished with the penalty of sense or of sensible fire.

I have discussed the first and second opinion, and refuted them from Scripture and ecclesiastical tradition. Now I shall come to the last opinion (*i.e.* the fifth) which is so far from promising eternal life to unbaptized children, that it also would have them punished by all kinds of pain, whether of loss or of sense, in mind and in body. This opinion *does not seem to be openly reproved by the Catholic Church*[1]; but it is everywhere rejected in the schools, and it seems improbable to me also; wherefore it may be refuted by the following arguments. . . .

The second argument is taken from the decretal of Innocent III. that most grave and learned Pope (*Decret. Greg.* lib. III. tit. xlii. c. 3) where we read that "the penalty of original sin is separation from the Divine Vision, and the penalty of actual sin is the torment of everlasting hell." In this place "the torment of hell" cannot be otherwise understood than as the *poena sensus*, which is opposed to the *poena damni*. Nor does this opinion contradict the witness of the Fathers who have written that infants are tormented with eternal pains in hell [*aeternis poenis in gehenna torqueri*]. For those use "penalty of hell" as equivalent to "general punishment," which may be referred either to the penalty of loss or to that of sense or to both together."

The looseness and ambiguity of language which Bellarmine here ascribes to these early Fathers is not such as we should ordinarily excuse in educated men writing on a subject less important than this of everlasting bliss or misery; certainly it does not bear out the contention that Roman Catholic theology is an exact science. Nor is he much happier in the rest of the chapter, where he does his best to explain Augustine's words away.

1. Note the significance of the words I have here italicized: Bellarmine knew no *authoritative* opinion in favour of the milder decision.

CHAPTER V.

Wherein we will answer Objections against the Teaching of the foregoing Chapter.

But men may, and do customarily object neither few nor frivolous arguments against what we have said in the foregoing chapter.

Arguments drawn from Matt. iii, 10 and 12; xiii, 49; xxv, 46, which last Augustine uses to prove "against the Pelagians, that unbaptized children shall go into everlasting fire; a conclusion which Bellarmine does not approve. He thinks that all these texts may refer to adults only. The first objection is from Apoc. xx, 6, 15 and xxi, 8. The sixth is from the Athanasian Creed.

The seventh objection is from the Fathers Augustine and Fulgentius. For St. Augustine writeth plainly enough that infants shall be tormented in eternal fire (*Serm. de Ver. Apost.* 14), and St. Fulgentius biddeth us hold most steadfastly to that same belief (*De Fide ad Petum*, c. 27). I answer, the holy Fathers seem to have wished to signify that the infants should be tormented in eternal fire by detention there, and not by burning. For this is the only thing which Augustine everywhere maintains as certain, that unbaptized children after death shall be in that place where everlasting fire is, together with the devil and his angels. But he plainly said that he could not define what their punishment [*poena*] should be, or of what quality or how great. And if perchance St. Fulgentius held otherwise, we do him no injustice if we prefer to follow St. Gregory Nazianzene with the whole school of theologians. . . .

CHAPTER VI.

The third Opinion is refuted; and it is asserted as probable that unbaptized infants will suffer an inward pain of mind, but very slight.

Lastly, it remains for us to discuss the third and fourth opinion, whereof the former exempted infants from all pain, whether inward or outward, while the latter left them inward pain but freed them altogether from the outward. The former is probable by reason of the authority of St. Thomas, St. Bonaventura, and many other illustrious theologians; but I deem the latter the more probable by reason of the authority of the holy Fathers St. Augustine, St. Fulgentius, St. Gregory, and others; who have been followed by some even among the Schoolmen.

I say therefore that unbaptized children will feel mental pain, since they will understand themselves to be deprived of bliss, severed from the company of their pious brethren and parents, thrust into the dungeon of hell, and destined to spend their lives in eternal darkness. But I hold, for many reasons, that this pain of theirs will be very slight and mild; partly because they had only the remotest disposition towards bliss; partly because they will understand that they have lost this so great good by no negligence of their own, and therefore will have no

worm gnawing at their conscience; partly, again, because they have never tasted of delight, whether earthly or heavenly; for we easily do without those good things to which we have never been accustomed. And, lastly, because they will see, in that same dungeon of hell, very many who are far more unhappy than themselves, to whose fate they themselves also might have come if they had chanced to live longer; wherefore St. Augustine affirmeth in many places that unbaptized children shall be in the mildest damnation of all. . . .

[But] St. Augustine denieth that [such] infants have any place of rest or happiness whatsoever; yet if, [as St. Thomas and others assert], they were touched by no pain or grief whatsoever, whether inward or outward, whether of body or of mind, then certainly they would enjoy rest, both great and perfect. . . . And, where St. Augustine saith "more tolerable," his words manifestly require that infants should have some pain to bear; for we cannot be said to "tolerate" unless we feel pain, and travail in bearing it. . . . Again, Augustine reckons among these infants' penalty the separation from the company of their pious kinsfolk. But certainly the separation from that which we love must needs bring pain. . . . St. Fulgentius, again, saith that unbaptized children sustain the interminable punishments of hell; but punishment is not wont to be painless.[1] St. Gregory, again, repeateth more than once that infants receive the perpetual torments of hell; and who would grant that torment can be painless? And St. Cyprian (or whoever else wrote that *Sermon on the Reason of Circumcision*) speaking of the penalty of original sin after death, saith: "after the death of the body, there remained travail of soul and affliction of the spirit"; what could be clearer than this?

He goes on to show the insufficiency of the reasons alleged by SS. Thomas and Bonaventura, and the once famous friar Richard of Middleton, against these earlier Fathers.

CHAPTER VII.

Answers to Objections against the Doctrine of this foregoing Chapter.

The most important of these is:—

Thirdly, men object that the concordant judgement of the Doctors [of the Church] inclines to the opinion that infants shall suffer no pain of mind whatsoever. I answer that this is not true: for the more ancient Doctors, St. Augustine, St. Fulgentius, St. Gregory, and the author of the *Sermon on the Cardinal Works of Christ*, incline rather to the contrary, as I have shown. Next, Peter Lombard (*Sent.* Lib. II, dist. 33), by freeing infants only from bodily fire and the worm of conscience, leaves it plain enough that they suffer lack of bliss, with the pain which follows this. Innocent III, again (Decret. Greg., Lib. III, tit. xlii, c. 3) when he says that the penalty of original sin is to lack the Divine Vision, and

1. The word here used, *supplicia*, is a very strong word for punishment; it is frequently used for *torment*. St. Gregory's words are *perpetua gehennae tormenta*.

that of actual sin is the torment of perpetual hell, doth indeed exclude from the penalty of infants that bodily fire which is properly called the torment of hell, but doth not exclude that sadness which is the natural concomitant of the loss of the Vision of God. Moreover, St. Thomas and St. Bonaventura testify that, in their own day, there were writers who taught that unbaptized infants would suffer pain of mind, though of the mildest, from lacking the Divine Vision. And in our own century Johann Driedo, as I have already said, held that we must assign to unbaptized children not only inward but also bodily pain.

[End of the Bellarmine Summary.]

From this summary of Bellarmine's argument, the following facts clearly emerge.

1.—The first Father to deal seriously with the question was the greatest of the whole Latin Church, St. Augustine. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* quotes, from the pre-Augustinian period, two earlier Fathers who seem actually to allow happiness to unbaptized children. But (*a*) in both these cases, the words are rather *obiter dicta*; without any pretence of Augustine's exhaustive treatment; (2) the weightier of them is not from a Latin Father, but from the Greek Gregory of Nazianzus; (3) one of them, Tertullian, is branded as a heretic by the Roman Church; and (4) both, in the quotations adduced, fall clearly into Pelagian heresy on the subject of original sin. When Tertullian actually prescribes delay in baptizing infants because they are still in "the age of innocence" (*de Bapt.*, c. 18), and when Gregory writes of unbaptized children as "without wickedness," (ἀπονήρους. Migne. P.G., vol. 36, col. 389b), they commit themselves to what would have been denied by the whole body of orthodox theology in the later Middle Ages, and to what was explicitly condemned by the Council of Trent. We need not, therefore, seriously consider these utterances which are bound up with such apparent heresy, and which the Fathers of Trent would have excused only on the plea that Tertullian and Gregory, in those passages, were writing too loosely to be held strictly accountable for what they seemed to say.

2.—Augustine almost invariably takes a very gloomy view of the fate of the unbaptized, nor did he retract those sayings even when opportunity offered. By far his most favourable estimate is the passage where he writes: "Though I cannot define how great, and of what sort, will be this ["mildest" damnation of infants], yet *I dare not assert* that it would have been better for them never to have been, than to be in this place." Professor Toner, in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, distinctly exaggerates this concession; he represents Augustine as existing "*one may not say* that for them non-existence would be preferable," (italics mine in both cases). Augustine does not disallow the statement in general, but only for himself. He says "*I* dare not *assert*"; yet, on the other hand, neither does he dare to *deny* what would seem the only possible consequence to be drawn from his own assertions that unbaptized infants "shall beyond doubt be in eternal fire" (Serm. 294, § 3; P.L., vol. 28, col. 1337). Petavius, in the seventeenth century, faced Augustine's actual words far more frankly. "Just before, he had written: 'But I

do not say that infants dying without baptism in Christ will be punished with so great pains that it would have been better for them never to have been born ; for this is the sentence which the Lord pronounced not upon all sorts of sinners, but upon the most wicked and impious sinners.' From these words, some men suppose Augustine to have changed his mind concerning infants ; for they argue that, if these are tortured with the same pains as the rest of the damned, then there would be no reason to doubt that it would have been better for them not to have been born. But [to such, I answer that] the primary and principal damnation is not in the pain and torture of flames ; so that, if we were concerned with punishment [*supplicii*] alone, the mere lack of the blessed Vision of God might be enough to enable us to say of them that they had better not have been born. But Augustine does not seem to have been regarding the penalty in itself, but the cause of that penalty, *viz.* guilt, which in itself is a more grievous and detestable evil than any hell ; so that, even though God had set no penalty to sin, yet it might be said that a man had better not be born than sin against God, especially if he die in sin. . . . . It is against that worst kind of sin that Augustine held Christ to have said ' it would have been better for them not to have been born ' ; not of those who had been guilty of lesser crimes ; still less, of children. And yet these shall suffer the pains of hell and the fire, even as those grown folk shall suffer who are not counted among the most wicked and impious " (*Theol. Dogm.*, lib. IX, c. x, §§ 10, 11). Indeed, Cardinal De Noris shows that infant damnation was counted as an essential article of faith in the whole African Church of the sixth century.[1]

3.—As late as 1100 A.D., we find St. Anselm, one of the greatest of the Latin Fathers, following Augustine's view that unbaptized infants are actually damned in the strict sense ; and the first to break through this tradition was Abelard, a scholar condemned on more than one count for heresy. Here, we may let the *Catholic Encyclopedia* speak, as a witness who will not exaggerate on my side. Prof. Toner there writes : " On the special question, however, of the punishment of original sin after death, St. Anselm was at one with St. Augustine in holding that unbaptized children share in the positive sufferings of the damned (P.L., vol. 158, coll. 457–61) ; and Abelard was the first to rebel against the severity of the Augustinian tradition on this point. According to him there was no guilt [*culpa*] but only punishment (*poena*) in the proper notion of original sin ; and, although this doctrine was rightly condemned by the Council of Soissons (Denzinger, *Enchiridion*, 376), his teaching, which rejected material torment (*poena sensus*), and retained only the pain of loss (*poena damni*) as the eternal punishment of original sin (P.L., vol. 178, col. 870) was not only not condemned but was generally accepted and improved upon by the scholastics. Peter Lombard, the Master of the Sentences, popularized it (Lib. II, dist. xxxiii, § 5) and it acquired a certain degree of official authority from the letter of Innocent III to the Archbishop of Arles, which soon found its way into the " Corpus Juris." Pope Innocent's teaching is to the effect that those dying with only

1. *See* Appendix III. Fulgentius died in 533.

original sin on their souls will suffer "no other pain, whether from material fire or from the worm of conscience, except the pain of being deprived for ever of the Vision of God" (*Decret. Greg.*, lib. III, tit. xlii, c. 3. *Majores*). It should be noted, however, that this *poena damni* incurred for original sin implied, with Abelard and most of the early scholastics, a certain degree of spiritual torment, and that St. Thomas was the first great teacher who broke away completely from the Augustinian tradition on this subject, and . . . maintained, at least virtually, what the great majority of later Catholic theologians have expressly taught, that the limbus infantium is a place or state of perfect natural happiness."[1]

4.—On this it may be noted that Professor Toner has here seriously misrepresented the actual words, even while he prints his own version in inverted commas as though it were a direct quotation from the Pope. The only sentence in Innocent's letter which even remotely resembles this is as follows: "Moreover the penalty of original sin is the absence of the Vision of God; that of actual sin, on the other hand, is the torment of everlasting hell."[2] These words of the great Pope are so far from amounting to what Professor Toner puts forward as a translation of the text, that they really lend themselves even better to the exactly contrary interpretation of Cardinal Noris, who writes (*Vindiciae Augustinianae*, P.L., vol. 47, col. 662) "I may easily answer that, even as Innocent saith that the penalty of actual sin is the torment of nether hell, and yet these words do not exclude the pain of loss [which everybody admits to be an essential part of the punishment of actual sin], therefore, since the Pope does not insert any restrictive or exclusive particle such as *only*, or *alone*, so also the absence of the Vision is rightly named as the penalty of original sin, but not the only penalty." It will presently be seen that Meffret, in the fifteenth century, had already noted how Innocent's words lend themselves to an interpretation directly contradicting that which is commonly put upon them by modern Roman Catholics.

5.—Though there is some exaggeration in this summary of St. Thomas's words, and in what Professor Toner afterwards implies as to the overwhelming proportion of those who followed him here, yet he (or, to go deeper, Abelard) did in fact discredit the stricter Augustinian view for the rest of the Middle Ages, in the theological schools. But, in the Middle Ages, there was an even wider gulf than now between the higher teaching and the popular beliefs; let us therefore study here, what I believe no Roman Catholic writer has yet dealt with, the working of

1. For this he refers to Aquinas. *De Malo* V, art. iii and *In Sent*, lib. II, 33, q. ii, art. 2.

2.—"Praeterea poena originalis peccati est catentia visionis Dei: actualis vero poena peccati est gehennae perpetuae cruciatus." This mistranslation of the *Catholic Encyclopedia* is either borrowed from, or has been borrowed by, (1) the anonymous Roman Catholic critic whose strictures on my article have been communicated to me by the Secretary of the Catholic Truth Society, and (2) Mr. Humphrey J. T. Johnson, in his article on "Dante and Salvation" (*Dublin Review*, Oct. 1919, p. 228). It would be very interesting to trace the original source of these distortions which, under protection of the censorship system, pass so freely from writer to writer in the Roman Catholic Church.

these theories among the lower clergy and lay-folk before the Reformation. Anyone who has the patience to read my Appendix IV will realize the subtlety—and, may we add, the inconclusiveness—of the arguments by which St. Thomas persuades himself that the unbaptized are happy enough not to shock our natural sense of justice, yet not happy enough to shock the ecclesiastical philosopher. We might well suspect *à priori* that the ordinary mourning mother, and even her ordinary parish priest, would have been mystified, if not positively scandalized, by all this hair-splitting over what, the human heart being what it is, must always seem an issue demanding the simplest assurances and the most unequivocal guidance. We might suspect this *à priori*; and, in fact, we find that not only plain lay-folk and ordinary persons, but even theologians and preachers of great distinction, especially those who were not specialists in scholastic disputation, were far from the quiet assurance described in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*.[1]

First, let us take abbots preaching to their monks. St. Bernard, a man full of natural kindliness, while emphasizing the comparatively tolerable fate of unbaptized children, is yet certain of some pains for them: "Woe also, though a milder woe, unto those who, born in wrath, did not wait to be born again in grace! for, dying in [the sin] wherein they were born, they shall remain the children of wrath. I should say of *wrath*, and not of *fury*[2]; for, as we most piously believe and most humanely sigh [to think], the penalties are mildest of those who draw from others the whole [sin] which is imputed to them." (*In Cant.*, serm. 69, § 3). Another great Cistercian of the twelfth century, Aelred of Rievaulx, writing as novice-master for the instruction of young monks, devotes a whole chapter to the theme "that the damnation of children is most just" (*Spec. Caritatis*, lib. I, c. 15). "Consider, I pray, that the whole human race is as dry wood, barren and poisoned at its very root, as infected with the venom of the Old Serpent, most justly condemned to the flames, set apart to be burned, and adjudged to damnation. What then? Art thou ungrateful, O unprofitable tree, that a few boughs, cut from thy dead root, are snatched from the burning, as grafted on a fruitful stock, and restored to their former comeliness?" And of dead children in especial, he recalls St. Paul's simile of the potter and his clay; has not God a right "to form whom he shall choose into its former honour, and to inflict the damnation due [to all] upon others whom he will? . . . We have said this in justification of the damnation of infants." There is not a word in the whole chapter, I think, to imply that a damned infant suffers otherwise than a grown man damned for his own sins.

1. Indeed the German Catholic Encyclopedia, which is generally written by far sounder scholars than those who have contributed to its English rival, is distinctly more modest in its claims. We read there "*Poena damni* is an article of faith with Catholics (Conc. Lugd. II et Florent.); on the other hand it is by no means an article of faith, nor is it even probable, that everlasting *poena sensus* is also bound up with this *poena damni*; for the Councils expressly point out the difference between punishments for personal sins and for original sin (poenis tamen disparibus puniendae).—Herder's *Kirchenlexikon*, vol. 4 (1886), col. 768.

2. He is expounding the Pauline text "they treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath."

though Aelred would doubtless have agreed with Augustine's "mildest damnation of all."

Meffret was a distinguished preacher of the mid-fifteenth century; his sermons were found worthy of republication by a Catholic bookseller, in two folio volumes, as late as 1612. I will quote here from his sermon on St. James (*De Praecipuis Sanctorum Festivitatibus*, No. 74). Speaking with indignation of the finely-dressed girls, worse than harlots, who murder their unbaptized babes, he goes on: "These are even more guilty than any other murderers, who slay the body only and cannot slay the soul. For such girls slay the soul with the body, sending it to be punished in everlasting fire. This is proved by St. Augustine in his *De Fide ad Petrum*,[1] incorporated in Canon Law [Gratian, *Decretum*, pars. III, dist. iv, c. 3] where he saith 'Hold fast to this truth, that not only men of rational age, but even babes who, having begun to live in the mother's womb, either die there'—and here the Glossator addeth 'through the drinks which these abominable women use to slay their babe in the womb'—'or, already born, die without the sacrament of baptism in the name of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, pass from this world to be punished in eternal fire.'[2] Here the Glossator saith that they shall be in darkness, not as punished with any pain of sense, but by the pain of loss, as St. Thomas determines, and as Petrus de Palude holds also. And St. Augustine addeth: 'Because, albeit they have no sin from any deed of their own, yet through fleshly conception they have drawn from their very birth the damnation of original sin.' And Augustine saith more [than is here incorporated in Canon Law]: 'For children dying unbaptized, at the Day of Doom, shall be set either on Christ's right hand or on His left. Not on His right; for thus they would go to heaven; and this is against Christ's words (John iii, 5) *Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* Therefore such children shall be set on the left hand, and shall therefore go into fire everlasting; for at the Last Judgement there is no middle way indicated.'[3] From this authority it is evident that children thus dying unbaptized are punished not only with the everlasting pain of loss, (to wit, with the want of the Beatific Vision), but also by pain of the senses. So also saith Cardinal Hugh,[4] that they are punished with divers torments, yet less than those who have committed actual sin; for theirs is the least pain of all, as St. Augustine saith in that text from the third chapter of his book *On Infant Baptism*, which is quoted in Canon Law [*Decretum*, pars. III, dist. iv, c. 136]. Yet in that same book he saith that he would rather be thus than not be at all; and there the gloss

1. Though ascribed to Augustine in Canon Law, this tract is really by another African bishop, Fulgentius, as we have seen already.

2. "De hoc seculo transeunt sempiterna igne puniendos."

3. "Quia in ultimo judicio via media non signatur." Purgatory was not yet a clearly-recognized Catholic doctrine in the early fifth century.

4. This quotation probably lurks among the voluminous works of Hugh of St. Cher, who is oftenest referred to by this name; but several other Hughs were sometimes so called; among them Hugh of St. Victor, who touches this subject also (P.L., vol. 176, col. 132).

saith that the pain is said to be *least*, not because there could be none less, but in comparison with the other pains which shall be suffered by those who die in mortal sin. And it is certain that he did not understand it as meaning *pain of loss*, since that is equal in either case ; therefore we must understand it as meaning *pain of sense*. But you might say ' Yet Canon Law saith [*Decret. Greg.*, lib. III, tit. xlii, c. 3] " The pain of original sin is the eternal lack of the sight of God ; but the pain of actual sin is perpetual torment in hell." ' To this Augustine answereth (*De Fide ad Petrum*)[1] that this decretal doth not mean to say that the privation of the Beatific Vision is the only pain wherewith unbaptized children are punished ; for it denieth not the pain of sense here, even as it denieth not in the damned the pain of loss. Yet if the decretal meant this, than it would be contradicted by that gloss which saith that the pain of children is least of all. But the gloss speaketh not of the pain of loss, which is equal in all ; therefore it speaketh of sensible pain ; and such pain is suffered by all who have not been freed from original sin by the baptism of water or blood or the Holy Ghost. Lo, to what misery these unhappy women bring forth the fruit of their womb ! And, if these innocent children shall thus be punished for sins not actually committed, how much more shall those devilish mothers be given up to eternal torment in hell-fire ! Yet I say not this, as that they cannot repent of this great crime ; as though I set a bar to God's pity ; but I say it as moved with compassion for the murder of innocent babes, which, alas ! is common in these days—*quae pro dolor ! his temporibus est communis*—and I have set down these words concerning their damnation, that these evil-minded women may see how great is the inhumanity which they practise upon the children of their own bowels, which brute beasts practise not. Yet, if such women would be truly penitent, Pope Alexander III hath counselled them to go into nunneries, wherein they may bewail their sins for evermore, as is written in Canon Law " [*Decret. Greg.*, lib. V, tit. x, c. 1]. Meffret repeats the gist of all this argument, more briefly, in a later sermon for All Souls' Day (no. 111). And in his other volume (*Sermones de Tempore*, no. 10), he enters upon a discussion which is correctly summed up in the index : " God punisheth unbaptized children eternally, yet mercifully." Their state, he pleads, is something better than downright " annihilation " ; and God might justly have annihilated them. " Wherefore they say with Jeremiah (*Lament.* iii, 22) : ' It is the mercies of the Lord that we are not consumed.' "

Contemporary with Meffret was the famous Dominican preacher Herolt, who writes : " You must know that there are six sorts of parents who slay their children. First, those who are knowingly guilty of the death of children unbaptized in the mother's womb. This is a most grievous murder ; for there they slay both body and soul. Augustine saith : ' The loss of one soul is a greater harm than that of a thousand bodies ' ; and Bernard : ' This whole world cannot estimate the price of a single soul.' Therefore a mother with child must needs be solicitous

1. *i.e.* we must expound this Decretal of Innocent III in the light of Augustine's words.

for the treasure which she beareth in her womb, lest she become an occasion of damnation to that child" (*Sermones Discipuli*, no. 16. a).

There can be little doubt that these represent the point of view of the average theologian, unpractised in high philosophical abstractions, in face of those Augustinian texts which had the double authority of the greatest among the Latin fathers, and of Canon law.

Robert Mannyng of Brunne, more than a century before this (1303), translated a moral manual by William of Waddington for the use of the English reading public. William writes that the child dying unbaptized is undoubtedly lost—"perdu est, ne doutez nient."[1] So also says Robert: "Withouten doubt, believe ye this, That it shall never come to bliss." He adds what William had not said: "Pain of heatë, nor of cold It shall nonë feel, no right it would. It nought misdid, nor servëd woe, Nor to none shall it go; This is pain withouten end, It shall never to joyë wend." And he goes on to tell how a midwife, anxious to baptize a child before its last gasp, used the wrong formula, praying only "That God Almighty and St. John Give the child christendom in flesh and bone."[2] The priest of the parish heard of this: "Then said the priest: 'God and St. Jame Give thee both sorrow and shame, And Christës malison have thou for-thy [*therefore*], And all other that were thee by! In evil timë wert thou born; For, in thy default, a soul is lorn,' She was commanded she should no more Come eftsoons where children were bore. . . . Midwife is a perilous thing, But she ken the points of christening."

Doubtless the medieval Gamps and Prigs took all this callously enough; but, to those who reflected seriously, such lapses must have brought unutterable horror. Giraldus Cambrensis (*Gem. Eccl*, p. 301) tells us of St. Maurilius, Bp. of Angers, who once refused to baptize a child until he had finished the Mass which he was singing; the child died meanwhile, "hearing which, Maurilius in fear and anguish left his bishopric, and crossed the seas to England, where he became gardener to a poor monastery at the village of Caister in Lincolnshire." He had thrown his cathedral keys into the sea; these were found by some of his clergy in the belly of a fish they bought, and the Bishop was at last persuaded to return. But it needed a yet greater miracle to break down his vow that he would undertake no further episcopal duties. He prayed at the child's grave, brought him back to life, and baptized him by the name of Renatus; then he knew his sin to be pardoned, and this Renatus became St. René, his successor in the see. The details need not concern us—Dugdale, for instance, knows of no monastery at Caister—but the psychology of the tale is obviously true. Maurilius would not have behaved thus if he, like the modern writer in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, could have confi-

1. *Handlyng Synne*, E.E.T.S., 1901, pp. 299 ff.

2. Uninstructed midwives had other rhymes of this kind; the Dominican preacher Herolt (fifteenth century) takes occasion to protest against "those old women who baptize children at the point of death, saying in the vulgar tongue:—

Si tu dois vivre, soit à toi pour bien;
Si tu dois mourir, pour toi baptême;
En nom du Père et du Fils et du Saint Esprit. *Amen.*"

dently believed " that these souls enjoy and will eternally enjoy a state of perfect natural happiness." Dante, certainly, did not so believe, though he was a diligent student of Aquinas. He fills his Limbo of the Unbaptized (*Inf.* IV) with " sighs, which caused the eternal air to tremble ; and this arose from the sadness, without torment, of the crowds that were many and great, both of children, and of women and men." Benvenuto de Imola, commenting on this passage, follows Aquinas's explanation in the main, but admits that Dante's " without pain " may be taken to mean " with but little pain." (*Comentum*, ed. Lacaita, vol. I, p. 141). And Dante makes no distinction between the infants and the virtuous heathen who find themselves in the same Limbo, lost because they lived before Christianity and had no baptism ; " for such defects, and for no other fault, are we lost." It was the united and undistinguished sighs of all this mixed multitude which " caused the eternal air to tremble."

Another medieval teacher not unversed in the early scholastic philosophy was Berthold of Regensburg, to whom Roger Bacon paid a special tribute. Berthold says on this subject (*Predigten*, ed. Pfeiffer, vol. I, p. 299) : " Ye women, by your leave, if ye doubt that the child come alive into the world, rather than that it should remain unbaptized, baptize its little head in the grace of our Lord. You should do all that in you lies, that it lack not baptism, and baptism of the right sort ; for, if it be unbaptized or ill baptized, then hath your neglect lost it that great honour which it should have had with God to all eternity ; it can never see God's face, nor that bliss which the saints and the angels of heaven enjoy with God. Jews' children and heathen children, who through their unfaith and lack of understanding know nothing and die in their ignorance, and all children of Christian folk that die unbaptized or without right baptism, these all go together to a place called Limbus, whither the Fathers of the Old Testament went ; and there they have no pain or torment [*martel*] but the torment of loss. That is the name for their state there ; it is called " the torment of loss " ; for they suffer the greatest of all losses, seeing that they shall never more come to heaven, so that they would endure great torments, if they could rightly know and understand how great loss they have suffered through their death without baptism. Then would each of them—and truly a great part of the people is of their party—there is not one of them, (I say), who would not climb with right good will up a red-hot pillar, reaching from the abyss [*dem apgründe*] up to heaven, and set all over with sharp razor-blades—up and down this pillar they would climb, with right good will, even to the Day of Doom, if thereby they might come to the everlasting sight of God. Therefore ye should take great heed lest, for so small a thing, you make the child lose so great honour and profit and joy and bliss." This is not encouraging to the mother of average intelligence ; still less comfort would she get from Berthold's description of the fate of virtuous pagans ; these men's loss, like that of the little children, was due to defect of baptism. He says (*ibid.* I, 128) " the smaller the sin is, the less is the torment. Lord Cato and Lord Seneca are there in hell, and yet they are not in the greatest torment ; they have the least torment that any man hath in hell ; yet are they so

wretched, and they have so great torment, that the whole world could not tell it in full." Philosophers in the schools might draw nice distinctions; but medieval preachers, enlarging as they do upon the unutterable misery of banishment from God's presence, are not equally careful to make an exception for those who lose the Beatific Vision through mere defect of baptism. Herolt says, for instance, (*Serm. de Temp*, no. 101, a—c), "There are five ways wherein the sinner is cut off. [(1) Death cuts them off from the body; (2) they are cut off from friends and kinsfolk; (3) by a more bitter deprivation, from all good people; (4) from all possibility of repentance or mercy]. Ye must know that, even if the Blessed Virgin and all the Saints were to pray, up to the Day of Doom, for one damned soul, Christ himself would give no ear unto them. . . . . As saith St. Augustine: 'If I knew that mine own father was in hell, I would no more pray for him than for the devil.' The fifth cutting-off is the privation of the sight of God; this is bitterest of all unto them that are cut off. St. Chrysostom saith in his commentary on Matthew: 'There are two eternal pains, to fall away and to be cast into fire. Many feel a horror of hell; but I say that the fall from glory will be far worse. For it would be ten thousand times more tolerable to bear a thunderbolt than to lose the sight of Christ's most gracious face, turned away from us in the Day of Judgement, and to be separated from Him.' And this same Chrysostom showeth in one of his sermons how it is most bitter of all to be shut out from God and the Saints and all the Elect and Angels of God, saying 'To be shut out from eternal bliss, and made alien to those things which are prepared for the saints, doth cause such torment and grief that, even though they were tormented by no outward pain, this alone would suffice.'" Those who heard a sermon of this kind (and Herolt's words could easily be paralleled) would need something more than Aquinas's subtle philosophical distinctions to comfort them, even though Aquinas's final conclusion had been more definitely consoling than in fact it is.

For Aquinas himself is certain that no supplications of the bereaved parents can move God to farther mercy on these unbaptized infants (*Sum. Theol.*, pars III, q. lxxi, art 7), and Bonaventura agrees with him (ed. Quaracchi, vol. IV, p. 958, a): "Prayers are of no profit to them, nor doth the Church intend that we should pray for them." The Franciscan bishop Panigarola, in a sermon preached under St. Peter's dome at Rome in 1577, reinforces this generally-acknowledged doctrine, and adds as one of his reasons: "for God loveth not those who are in the Limbo of Children, since those souls have not ever had baptism, which is the door of grace; therefore they have never had grace." It is true that God does not positively hate them, as He hates the souls in hell proper; for Panigarola is, on the whole, on the merciful side. (*Prediche Quadragesimali*. Venice, 1600. p. 358, sermon for the 31st day in Lent).

No doubt the leaven of humanity gradually worked. When the Renascence comes, we find Erasmus daring to hint some definite hope of mercy, in his *Christiani Matrimonii Institutio* (*Opera*, vol. V, 1704, p. 622c). He writes: "Gerson, whose opinion would not seem altogether to deserve rejection, conceived such hopes of the greatness of God's

mercy as that the children of pious parents, if they died without having committed sin, even though unbaptized, should not be consigned altogether to eternal torments." Sir Thomas More, in his letter against the rigorist monk who had attacked Erasmus, was more outspoken: "Augustine asserts that infants dying without baptism are consigned to physical torments in eternal punishment—how many are there who believe this now? unless it be that Luther, clinging by tooth and nail to the doctrine of Augustine, should be induced to revive this antiquated notion."[1]

Whether in fact Luther revived it I do not know; but we have seen how much of it was revived by Bellarmine, who is now being canonized for his services in controversy against Luther and Calvin. Nor was Bellarmine the only Augustinian in the Roman Church, nor the least merciful. Petavius, "the Eagle of the Jesuits," who corrected eight thousand mistakes in Baronius's great Annals, and whose historical scholarship moved Gibbon to admiration, was on this side[2]; so was Bossuet, "the Eagle of Meaux," even more distinguished than Bellarmine as a hammer of Protestants;[3] so was Cardinal de Noris, Papal Librarian and one of the most learned Roman Catholic scholars of the seventeenth century[4]; so again was a distinguished Dominican theologian of the eighteenth century, J. F. M. De Rubeis.[5] The first three of these are enumerated in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* article, which briefly reproduces some of their objections: "As students of history, they felt bound to admit that, in excluding unbaptized children from any place or state even of natural happiness and condemning them to the fire of hell, St. Augustine, the Council of Carthage, and later African fathers like Fulgentius (*De Fide ad Petrum*, c. 27) intended to teach no mere private opinion, but a doctrine of catholic faith; nor could they be satisfied with what scholastics, like St. Bonaventure and Duns Scotus, said in reply to this difficulty; namely that St. Augustine, to whom the text of Fulgentius just referred to was attributed, had simply been guilty of exaggeration. . . . Neither could they accept the explanation which even some modern theologians continue to repeat; that the Pelagian doctrine condemned by St. Augustine as a heresy (P.L., vol. 44, col. 505) consisted in claiming supernatural, as opposed to natural, happiness for those dying in original sin. . . . Moreover, there was the teaching of the Council of Florence, that 'the

1. Quoted by F. Seebohm. *Oxford Reformers*, chap. xvi, § 4.

2. *Theologicorum Dogmatum* lib. IX, c. X; and again "De Pelagianorum et Semipelagianorum Haeresi" (Paris, 1643), p. 268. He sums up: "That idea of a midplace [between Heaven and Hell] whereunto some folk, even nowadays believe unbaptized infants to be transported, was counted by our early forefathers among Pelagian heresies." Yet Petavius has been styled the "Father of the History of Dogma" (*Cath. Encyc.*, vol. xi, p. 744).

3. His position is given briefly in De Rubei's, p. 408. He reported a book to the Pope as unorthodox because the author came to this conclusion "Therefore there is no reason for grieving [over the fate of infants dying unbaptized] nor for complaining, but rather for rejoicing and giving of thanks."

4. *Vindiciae Augustinianae*, first printed Padua, 1673, and Brussels 1675; reprinted by Migne in *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 47, coll. 571 ff.

5. *De Peccato Originali*, Venice, 1757.

souls of those dying in actual mortal sin, or in original sin alone, go down at once [*mox*] into hell, to be punished, however, with widely different penalties.' "

I have already noted the liberty which Professor Toner here takes with the text of the Council of Florence, where there is no word (nor in the proceedings of the Second Ecumenical Council of Lyons from which this statement of doctrine is reproduced) corresponding to the " widely " here introduced to make matters seem more favourable for the children. And I must here subjoin the final passage of those in which this modern writer tries to meet objections which Bellarmine and Bossuet felt so strongly (p. 258, col. 2). " Finally, in regard to the teaching of the Council of Florence, it is incredible that the Fathers there assembled had any intention of defining a question so remote from the issue on which reunion with the Greeks depended, and one which was recognized at the time as being open to free discussion and continued to be so regarded by theologians for several centuries afterwards. What the Council evidently intended to deny in the passage alleged was the postponement of final awards to the day of judgment. Those dying in original sin are said to descend into hell ; but this does not necessarily mean anything more than that they are excluded eternally from the Vision of God. In this sense they are damned, *i.e.* they have failed to reach their supernatural destiny, and this, viewed objectively, is a true penalty. Thus the Council of Florence, however literally interpreted, does not deny the possibility of perfect subjective happiness for those dying in original sin ; and this is all that is needed from the dogmatic viewpoint to justify the prevailing Catholic notion of the children's limbo, while from the standpoint of reason, as St. Gregory of Nazianzus pointed out long ago, no harsher view can be reconciled with a worthy concept of God's justice and other attributes."

It would seem a very desperate necessity which drives a modern professor to rule out St. Augustine and St. Fulgentius, St. Gregory and St. Anselm, with all the Fathers of the Great Council of Carthage, as a set of people dominated by unworthy conceptions of God's attributes. And, indeed, this sort of apologia for the Council of Florence was met, long ago, by one of the most learned men who have ever adorned the Roman communion, and by another equally orthodox theologian of great distinction in his day. Petavius wrote : " Anyone who accurately studies this Florentine decree, will see that its sense is the same [as that of Augustine, Gregory, etc.]. . . . It says that the same pains of hell will punish those souls which die only in original sin, and those which die in actual mortal sin ; but these pains, (as we have already quoted from Augustine) are the burning of fire. So that, although in this same burning the punishment of those who die in mortal sin is dissimilar, yet the penalty of torturing flames is the same. Therefore infants are not tormented with equal torture of flames, yet tormented they are. For to say that pains are *unequal* does not make them into something of a different nature and quality." (*Theol. Dogm.*, lib. IX, c. x, § 12). De Rubeis, again, wrote (*De Pecc. Orig.*, p. 419) : " In the second Ecumenical Council of Lyons, the Greek Emperor Michael Palaeologus pronounced

a confession of faith in which he professed 'that the souls of those dying in mortal sin, or in original sin alone, go down at once to hell, to be punished, however, with different punishments.' The same words occur in the Decree of Union published by the Council of Florence. Therefore we must hold *de fide* (1) that infants are damned, (2) that they are thrust into hell after death, (3) that they and adult sinners are punished with different punishments.[1] Concerning the situation of hell, or the difference of punishment, or the state of infants after the Judgement Day, no decree has been drawn up; a variety of opinions is [here] permitted, and liberty of thought."

A generation after these words were printed, in 1794, a Synod at Pistoia decreed the misery of unbaptized infants; Pius VI condemned its views as extreme, yet he ventured on no definition for his own part. "This condemnation," says the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, was practically the knell of extreme Augustinianism, while the mitigated Augustinianism of Bellarmine and Bossuet had already been rejected by the bulk of Catholic theologians." But the real deciding factor here has been the march of civilization. Cardinal Manning, in our own day, might safely ignore Augustine's words altogether, and might simply affirm "their eternal state is a state of happiness, though it be not in the Vision of God."[2] Yet greater cardinals, and far more learned theologians of his own Church, had not ventured to ignore Augustine in those earlier days when the more rudimentary humanitarian impulses of European society were still struggling against age-long traditions of sectarian intolerance. It needed great boldness on the part of Erasmus and More to go so far as they went on the merciful side; it would have needed equal moral courage on Manning's part to take the stricter side in agreement with St. Augustine, St. Fulgentius, Bellarmine and Bossuet.

Roman Catholics sometimes claim that they are the only Christians left who really believe in heaven and hell; yet this is the chaos of their beliefs! Of the popes who have reigned since Augustine condemned these infants to hell, not one has cared or dared to take them boldly out. The *Catholic Encyclopedia*, it is true, can define in one clear sentence what no Pope has ever ventured to define; and those minds which are content to regard the most popular organs of their own religious party as infallible may thus be at rest. But this only brings out more strongly the point which I had to emphasize in *The Hibbert Review*, that the differences between the Roman Catholic of to-day and his ancestors of the Middle Ages are greater, perhaps, in God's sight than any differences which divide the average Roman Catholic from the average Anglican or Methodist at the present moment. They attempt to explain this away by pleading that these apparent contradictions are Protestant blunders;

1. The exact words of De Rubeis are: (1) "Parvulos damnari; (2) In infernum post mortem eos detrudi; (3) Poenis illos ac adultos peccatores disparibus puniri."

2. Quoted as from his *Sermons on Sin and its Consequences*, pp. 20–1, in a pamphlet entitled *Mr. Fitzjames Stephen and Cardinal Vaughan*, by Father W. Humphrey, S.J. (1874). This pamphlet takes the same line as the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, but its imperfect references very much diminish its value for readers who want to get at the real facts.

that their own theologians use highly technical language which ignorant outsiders easily misunderstand, but which is clear to those within the fold. The Secretary of the Catholic Truth Society quotes to me, from some anonymous Roman Catholic who has criticized me in a letter to him, "Mr. C. is at liberty to put any interpretation he likes on the *Catechism* of the Council of Trent, as I am at liberty to put any interpretation on the Fisher Act. But it is *the mind* of the legislator that matters. In both cases we ought to try to ascertain the mind of the legislator—the mind of Conc. Trent. is *not* in doubt: the common teaching of the Church is its expression, as the common law expresses the mind of the legislator. Mr. C. himself says that it was a minority of theologians who put unbaptized babies in hell. Except where we have defined doctrines there are always minorities with curious views. He must know that they do not represent the teaching of the Church—they represent nothing but themselves. For C. to take *their* views as a guide to the meaning of Conc. Trent. is simply silly. It is not a question of what C. thinks "sempiterna miseria" means—it is a question of what the *Conc. Trent. meant*, and there is no dispute about that." Now, any reader who will look back to Chap. II, p. 7, of this pamphlet may realize that, if I am too ignorant to understand the mind of the orthodox legislator, so also was Cardinal Bellarmine, the greatest of all Roman Catholic controversialists, who must have known intimately several of the commissioners to whom the composition of the Catechism of the Council of Trent had been entrusted. Bellarmine, as we have seen, writing after the publication of the Catechism, insists: "We must hold, by the Catholic faith, that infants dying unbaptized are absolutely condemned, and shall for ever lack not only heavenly but even natural happiness"; and, elsewhere, he appeals to the Council of Trent in support of his thesis. If, therefore, I am simply silly—a person not to be argued with, but just to be confuted by the *ipse dixit* of the first chance priest of to-day—so also was Cardinal Bellarmine. It would be difficult to emphasize more strongly the enormous difference of outlook between the priest of the seventeenth century, in those days when the Roman Catholic hierarchy was a real intellectual force, and the priest of to-day.

But, lest we seem to follow a course against which we elsewhere protest, and to decide this vexed question by the mere appeal to one great authority, let us meet this criticism in detail. We have seen that the anonymous critic, however well-intentioned, writes flatly contrary to the actual historical facts. On this particular point, there must be very serious "doubt" in the mind of any well-read Catholic who realizes that Popes have never defined, and that Councils defined in such a way as to leave the greatest scholars of the Roman communion divided upon this capital question. Quietly to rule out men like Bellarmine, Petavius, Bossuet and De Noris as a negligible "minority with curious views" is to display either great ignorance of this subject, or great lack of candour.

It is, in fact, mainly the march of civilization which has wrought this great change in the Roman Church, from those days of complete Augustinianism to the present repudiation of Augustine. Though a Protestant like Jonathan Edwards might, in detail, express himself even more un-

mercifully than that province of 466 bishops in whose name St. Fulgentius declared it as an essential of true faith that unbaptized infants "will be punished with the eternal penalty of everlasting fire,"[1] yet it is partly the mere existence of Protestantism, the mere compulsion thus laid upon Catholicism to compete in goodness against heresy, which has assured the final victory of the humaner views. It was one of the damning counts against a thirteenth-century heretic that he had spoken words which, in effect, would be approved alike by thousands of reasonable Catholics and Protestants to-day: "If I could lay hold on that god who, out of a thousand human beings whom he hath made, saves a single one and damns all the rest, then I would tear and rend him with tooth and nail as a traitor, and I would brand him as a false traitor and spit in his face!"[2]

And that is why the modern Roman Catholic has decided over and over again against the plain pronouncements of his own official Church. No doubt the *Catholic Encyclopedia* does truly represent the modern Catholic view: "Now it may confidently be said that, as the result of centuries of speculation on the subject, we ought to believe that these souls [of unbaptized infants] enjoy and will eternally enjoy a state of perfect natural happiness; and this is what Catholics usually mean when they speak of the *limbus infantium*, the 'children's limbo.'" But at what cost to logic and plain sense is this comforting belief obtained? History shows us how the Pope and Second Ecumenical Council of Lyons, which could not err, accepted the following statement as a satisfactory definition of Catholic belief; that unbaptized infants "go down at once into hell, to be punished, however, with different punishments" from those who die in mortal sin; that is, from souls whose torments were asserted to be simply inconceivable in their horror and in their duration. By this pronouncement, we are asked to believe, the Pope and the Council meant to describe a state of perfect natural happiness. Moreover, we are to believe that, during the 150 years and more which elapsed between this Council of Lyons and that of Florence, no Catholic theologian and no audible voice from the Catholic laity had arisen to suggest that it would scarcely be possible to choose any more random and dangerous phrases for expressing truths which a plain man can express clearly in half-a-dozen words. Then, when Pope and Fathers were assembled again at Florence, in order to deal with that most important question of Eastern reunion, was there nobody in all the Catholic Church to suggest reconsideration and explanation? The Greeks had come to seal their submission by professing solemnly and publicly their complete agreement in faith with the Church of Rome, detail by detail; yet here, again, when it came to the category in which unbaptized infants are included, they could find no better description for this state of real bliss than those words *hell* and *punishment* already asserted at Lyons! Lastly, the Council of Trent sits as a court of final appeal for all Christian doctrine; it examines minutely into every current error it judges, and condemns; and the gist of all these consultations and decisions is worked into an elabo-

1. *See* Appendix III.

2. A. S. Turberville, *Mediaeval Heresy and the Inquisition*, 1920, p. 29 *note*.

rate official statement of doctrine for the instruction of the clergy and their flocks—the *Catechism of the Council of Trent.* It carefully defines the state of unbaptized children as that of creatures "begotten to eternal misery and destruction"; "ils ne viendraient au monde que pour leur malheur éternel"—so run the authorized translations into English and French. All these pronouncements, the modern Roman apologist would ask us to believe, are the natural struggles of an infallible Church to define that "eternal state of perfect natural happiness" which the *Catholic Encyclopedia* hits off so happily in a single crisp and convenient phrase! It is strange that theologians who juggle thus with language should never suspect the double-edged nature of the tools they are using. The anonymous champion of the Catholic Truth Society thinks that, if I had been more familiar with Catholic ways of thought, I should have seen at once that the "eternal misery and destruction" of the Council of Trent means eternal and perfect natural happiness. But what is to prevent a later and more learned generation of Catholics from discovering that the "perfect natural happiness" of the *Catholic Encyclopedia* really means eternal misery and destruction? Even in theology, it is fatal when we can no longer trust a man's word; and in this present case we are painfully compelled to reject the plain assurance either of an ancient Council or of a modern Encyclopedia.

When we thus plead at the bar of common sense, these apologists try to change the venue. There is here no question (they say) of plain words; plain words would be out of place. Theological language is, and must always be, highly technical; Popes and Councils speak in cryptograms; but the priest holds the key to this cipher; he reads the real mind of Popes and Councils; the faithful need have no misgiving. But history explodes this plea also. We have only to look a few generations back, and we find four of the greatest names in Roman Catholic scholarship arrayed against the orthodox Romanist writers of to-day, and interpreting these documents just as they would be interpreted by the man in the street who takes *damnation, hell,* and *punishment* to mean what they seem to mean; the man who is accustomed to plain words and relies on plain common sense.

I trust, therefore, that the unprejudiced reader will now approve my main theses, that there have been very serious variations in the Roman Catholic Church upon this subject of primary importance; and that these milder conceptions, which in our day claim exclusive orthodoxy, have been dictated by no Pope or Ecumenical Council, but by the kindliness and common-sense inherent in human nature and working more freely under modern conditions of life, even against the main current of ecclesiastical tradition. The greatest schoolmen took a merciful view; but higher authority was, on the whole, against them; and they themselves could only maintain their position by such refinements of logic as the ordinary medieval parishioner could not follow. The infallible Church sided rather with Augustine in the Middle Ages; the people lived then under something of the terrors preached by Augustine; but now the modern Catholic, fortunately for himself and for us, tries to forget Augustine altogether. *Securus judicat orbis terrarum*; modern

humanity has condemned certain ideas to eternal opprobrium; the civilized world would hiss any advocate out of court who should preach what saints and popes and two Ecumenical Councils held in the Middle Ages; and therefore there is no Church which so preaches in 1922.

Closely connected with this subject is the low ideal of matrimony to which Augustine, and the generality of medieval theologians, were driven by this doctrine of original sin, and by the law of sacredotal and monastic celibacy. Jerome's epigram became classical—"Marriage peoples the earth, but Virginity peoples heaven." (Migne. P.L., vol. 23, col. 246). Less well-known is his argument from the essential impurity of the number two, and from the fact that the unclean animals went two by two into the Ark. I deal at some length with this in the first volume of my *Five Centuries of Religion*, appendix 2. P.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX I.

Books for Children. Book X. The Sight of Hell. By the Rev. J. Furniss C.SS.R. Permissu Superiorum. (Dublin, Duffy, about 1850).

XXVIII. The Fifth Dungeon.—*The Red-hot Oven.*

Psalm xx—"Thou shalt make him as an oven of fire in the time of Thy anger." You are going to see again the child about which you read in the *Terrible Judgment*, that it was condemned to Hell. See! it is a pitiful sight. The little child is in this red-hot oven. Hear how it screams to come out. See how it turns and twists itself about in the fire. It beats its head against the roof of the oven. It stamps its little feet on the floor of the oven. You can see on the face of this little child what you see on the faces of all in Hell—despair, desperate and horrible!

The same law which is for others is also for children. If Children, knowingly and willingly, break God's commandments, they also must be punished like others. This child committed very bad mortal sins, knowing well the harm of what it was doing, and knowing that Hell would be the punishment. God was very good to this child. Very likely God saw that this child would get worse and worse, would never repent, and so it would have to be punished much more in Hell. So God in His mercy called it out of the world in its early childhood.

APPENDIX II.

Aquinas *In Sent. lib. III*, q. 2, A, art. 1.

"Hell is fourfold; one is the hell of the damned, wherein is darkness, from lack both of the Divine Vision and of grace; and there is bodily pain, and this is the hell of the damned. There is another hell above this, wherein is darkness from lack both of the Divine Vision and of grace, yet no bodily pain; and this is called the children's limbo. There is another above this, wherein is darkness from lack of the Divine Vision but not of grace, yet here is bodily pain; and this is called purgatory. There is another higher still, wherein is darkness from lack of the Divine Vision but not from lack of grace, nor is there bodily pain here; and this is the hell of the Holy Fathers [of the Old Testament], whereunto Christ descended locally, but not so as to experience the darkness."

APPENDIX III.

Cardinal H. De Noris, *Vindiciae Augustinianae* (Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, vol. 47, col. 646).

"I will here show plainly that the old African Church, which numbered 466 bishops, held so definitely to the punishment of unbaptized children by bodily pains in hell, that it was reckoned among the dogmas of faith. When Peter the Deacon

—a very learned man, as may be seen from his book on Incarnation and Grace—was about to pass into Greece, he wrote and prayed St. Fulgentius to send him a brief synopsis of Catholic faith whereunto he should conform himself; for he understood that many heresies raged all through the East. Fulgentius sent him his book *On Faith, to Peter*, which I have discussed in my *History of Pelagianism*, Bk. II, c. 19. In that volume St. Fulgentius recites forty dogmas pertaining to the Catholic faith, divided into separate chapters, each of which begins: "Hold most firmly, and never doubt that, etc." The first dogma is rehearsed in chapter 4. Fulgentius, having in chapter 26 recited his 23rd dogma, on original sin, writes in chapter 27: 'Hold most firmly, and never doubt, not only that men of reasonable age, but even children who die either in the womb or at birth without the sacrament of holy baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, shall be punished with the torment [*supplicio*] of eternal fire; for, even though they had no sin of their own doing, yet by their carnal conception and birth they have contracted the damnation of original sin.' This 24th dogma of faith (or as he calls it, chapter), he puts before Peter as an aritcle of belief; and afterwards, having recited the rest of his chapters, he says finally in chapter 44: 'Meanwhile, do thou faithfully believe, firmly hold, and truly and patiently defend these forty chapters which pertain most firmly to the rule of true faith; and, whomsoever you shall find asserting the contrary of these things, shun him as the pest and cast him forth as a heretic. For what I have here laid down is so congruent to the Catholic faith, that whosoever will contradict not only all but even a single article, in the very fact that he contumaciously fights against any one of them, and doth not shrink from teaching the contrary, is made manifest [*apparent*] as a heretic and an enemy of the Christian faith, and therefore as one whom all Catholics must anathematize.' Thus Fulgentius bears witness that infants dying in mere original sin *shall be punished with the torment of eternal fire*, and that this *pertains to the rule of true faith, and he must be cast off as a heretic who will contradict* this proposition. These facts need no comment; they simply need to be read. Who can fail to see from these words that the African Church had counted St. Augustine's doctrine of the pains of children among the dogmas of the faith?"

APPENDIX IV.

Aquinas on the Limbo of Children (*In II Sent.*, dist. xxxiii, q. 2, art. 2).

"To the second article we proceed thus: it would seem that unbaptized children suffer spiritual affliction in their souls, for as Chrysostom saith (*In. Math.* hom. 33), the damned shall feel a more grievous pain in lacking the Vision of God than in being burned by the fires of hell; but children shall lack that vision, and therefore they will feel spiritual affliction therefrom. [Here follow arguments *pro* and *con*, after which Aquinas sums up] I answer, that we must say that there are three different opinions on this point. (1) For some say that the light of reason will be so darkened in these infants that they will not know their loss: but this does not seem probable, that a soul freed from its burden of clay should not know at least those things which can be searched out by reason, and even much more. (2) Therefore others say that children have a perfect knowledge of such things as are the subject of natural knowledge; that they know God, and know themselves to be deprived of His sight, wherefrom they shall feel some pain; yet their pain shall be so far mitigated as they have not incurred by their own fault this guilt for which they are damned. This again does not seem probable, for such grief for the loss of so great good cannot be small, and especially when there is no hope of recovery; wherefore their pain would not be, [in St. Augustine's words] "most mild." Moreover, and altogether for the same reason why they shall not be punished by the affliction of sensible and external pain, they shall not feel the lesser pain either; for the pain of the penalty corresponds to the delight of the sin. Wherefore, as there was no delight in original sin, so all pain is excluded from its penalty. (3) For this reason others say that they will have a perfect knowledge of those things which are the subject of natural knowledge, and know themselves to be deprived of eternal life, and why they are so deprived, yet in this they will have no affliction; we must see, therefore, how this might be.

You must know, therefore, that a right-minded person is not afflicted to miss that which exceeds his own proportion, but only at missing anything to which he was in some way proportionate; as no wise man is afflicted at being unable to fly like a bird, or at not being king or emperor, when this is in no way his due; though he would be afflicted if he were deprived of a thing which he had any aptitude to obtain. I say, therefore, that every man who has the use of free-will is proportioned to attain unto everlasting life, because he can prepare himself for grace, whereby he

BERKELEY BAPTIST DIVINITY SCHOOL

will earn everlasting life ; and therefore, if men miss this, they will have the greatest pain, for they lose something which might have been their own. But children have never been proportioned to the acquirements of life everlasting ; for neither was this due to them on natural principle, since it exceeds all natural faculty, nor, again, could they by their own works earn any such benefit ; wherefore they will feel no grief whatever at losing the Vision of God ; nay, rather, they will rejoice in the fact that they will participate greatly in the divine bounty and in natural perfections. Nor can it be said that they were indeed proportionate to earn eternal life, though not by their own works yet by the works of others around them, since they might have been baptized by other folk, even as many other children of the same condition have been baptized and have won eternal life ; for this is a matter of superexceeding grace, that one should receive a reward without any act on his own part ; wherefore the lack of such [superexceeding] grace causeth no more sadness in children that have died without baptism than is caused in wise men by the fact that they themselves have not received many graces which others like unto themselves have received. [Aquinas then meets the five main objections]. To the fifth, we must reply that, although unbaptized children are separated from God with respect to that conjunction which is through glory,[1] yet they are not altogether severed from Him ; nay, they are conjoined unto Him by participation in natural good things ; and thus they will be able even to rejoice in [*de*] Him by their natural knowledge and affection."

APPENDIX V.

The Catholic Truth Society.

We have seen how the *Catholic Encyclopedia* and *The Dublin Review* try to prove their thesis by a quotation which professes to be translated from Innocent III but which has, in fact, been deliberately garbled, probably by some other Roman Catholic authority from whom these two writers have copied blindly and without acknowledgment. The attitude of the Catholic Truth Society towards this kind of edifying falsehood may be judged from the following letter which, after a long correspondence, I addressed to its Secretary, (Dec. 11th, 1922). " Thank you for the quotation, which has reached me safely this morning. But your informant's fresh communication tends to confirm my suspicion that he was quoting all the while at second or third hand, and had never seen the Latin original of which he professed to give me a translation. He is evidently so unfamiliar with the Decretals as to imagine the *Decretales Gregorii* to form part of Gratian's *Decretum*. However, he has at last given me the original Latin of that sentence, which I asked for first on November 20th. I therefore know now, what then I could only surmise, that he has attempted to confute me with a ' translation ' which, by inserting a dozen words which are not in the original, makes Innocent say what, according to some of the greatest scholars your Church has ever produced, he was very far from saying. This correspondence leaves me no hope that your informant, himself, will ever confess his error. But I will finally put it thus to you ; here I enclose, in parallel columns, Innocent's exact words and the ' translation ' by means of which your friend tried to confute me. Will you undertake to produce a single Latin scholar with a reputation to lose, within or without your Church, who will allow me to publish it as his deliberate judgment that the one column is a translation of the other ?

Innocent III's actual words in the Decretal *Ad Majores :*	Your informant's words ,as given in your letter of Nov. 3rd, taken (apparently) at second-hand from the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, or possibly from *The Dublin Review*, Oct. 1919, p. 228 :
' Poena originalis peccati est carentia visionis Dei, actualis vero peccati est gehennae perpetuae cruciatus.'	' Innocent III . . . says that there is " *no other* pain, *whether from material fire or from the worm of conscience, except* being deprived for ever of the vision of God." '

In order to make my meaning more plain I have underlined the words for which, so far as I can see, there is no warrant whatever in the original."

I have received no answer from this at the time of going to press (Dec. 18th).

1. Compare Panigarola's words which I quote on p. 23.

Printed at the Wessex Press, Taunton.

GTU LIBRARY
3 2400 00576 6401

GTU Library
2400 Ridge Road
Berkeley, CA 94709
For renewals call (510) 649-2500
All items are subject to recall.